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THE FRIDAY LETTER

Vol. 12 No. 18

Published by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service

September 21, 1990

A Note from Vernon Morgan...

It's terrific to have this new improved Friday Letter as a way to say a temporary goodbye to all of you. I am Alabama-bound on October 1st to begin a two-year assignment with the State Department of Human Resources in Montgomery. Since I began my FNS career in Birmingham long ago, I am excited about going back, after some 27 years of diverse FNS experience, to try and lend a hand in the delivery of assistance programs in my home State.

As I leave Alexandria, I will be taking a treasure chest of memories and experiences that all of you have given to me. Knowing, working and playing with you during these last 20 years at Headquarters has helped me to grow and learn, both personally and professionally. Carolyn and I not only raised our family here but are also blessed with a lot of good friends. Northern Virginia seems like home and we will miss the area and you, but we do wish all of you the best while we are gone.

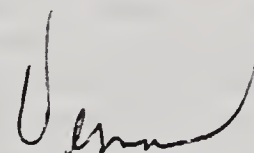
To my friends in the Regions and Field Offices, I especially offer my good wishes. I started my career in the field and spent five good years in the Southeast Regional Office; and for the last three have been working daily with your issues and concerns. I know and value the vast contribution you make in working in partnership with the States to deliver our programs. I look forward to laboring again in that vineyard...albeit in a different role.

I am grateful to **Betty Jo Nelsen** and **Catherine Bertini** for helping to make my detail possible. I've served a number of Assistant Secretaries and all of the Administrators of FNS in one capacity or another. I've seen good times and bad so believe me when I say these are the good times at FNS. There is, in my view, a much needed concern for the quality and fiscal integrity of our programs, and at the same time a caring and compassionate attitude toward those who receive our program benefits.



I believe that the employees of FNS are valued as never before by our leadership and that there is a desire to see each of us reach our full potential as workers and as human beings. These days, FNS is indeed a great place to work!

I expect to come back to FNS in two years better prepared to help with our important mission. In the meantime, stay in touch.



Welcome Phyllis Gault



We are pleased to welcome **Phyllis Gault** as Acting Deputy Administrator for the Food Stamp Program. Phyllis is a Certified Public Accountant who has served as a financial specialist for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and as a partner in the accounting firm of Smith, Gault and Company. She has held other positions in State government and run for State office. **Phyllis** holds a B.S. degree in accounting from East Central State University in Ada, OK. She is a native of Ada, Oklahoma, has two grown children and a one-year old grandchild.

During her first week on the job,

Phyllis has already attended a House Committee hearing and a Senate staff briefing, met with all headquarters food stamp employees in an all-employee meeting followed by individual greetings as she stopped by each employee's desk, and has talked to the regional food stamp directors by conference call. Next week she will accompany MARO food stamp director, **Ralph Picone** on a one-day visit to a food stamp office in Wilmington, Delaware and to the EBT site in Baltimore, Maryland. She is looking forward to getting out to the regions as soon as opportunities arise.

Congressman Parris Speaks at Union Rally Against Furloughs

The National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), Chapter 226, held a rally on September 13 to "fight back" against the possibility of furloughs. Remarks were made by **Carole Clem**, Chief Steward, **Ed Euell**, President, **Jeff Friday**, National Council, **George King**, Director, Public Relations, NTEU National HQs, and **Ron Johnson**, Chair of NTEU Planning Committee Against Furloughs. Congressman **Stan Parris**, 8th District, Virginia, was the guest speaker. "It's time to become fiscally responsible," Congressman **Parris** told the group. Congressman **Parris** went on to say that he felt Federal employees work very hard to maintain a quality of life, with salaries lagging 30% behind private industry. The Federal Government provides so many services that for employees to lose even one day of pay impacts the productivity of the nation.

Communiques were read to the group from Congressman **Frank Wolf** and Reverend **Jesse Jackson**. Congressman **Wolf** wrote "...I will continue to press for responsible budget cuts that do not unfairly target federal employees." Reverend **Jackson** wrote "what kind of government would furlough over 600 FNS workers who administer a \$2.2 billion WIC Program at a time when the infant mortality rate in this country is higher than it is in many third world countries?"

Another rally will be held September 27, 12:00-1:00, at the Capitol, if an agreement is not reached. A "human chain" will be made around the Capitol, formed by Federal workers. This rally is sponsored by NTEU's National Headquarters. Travel arrangements from Park Office Center to the Capitol are being worked on at this time and more information will be provided next week.



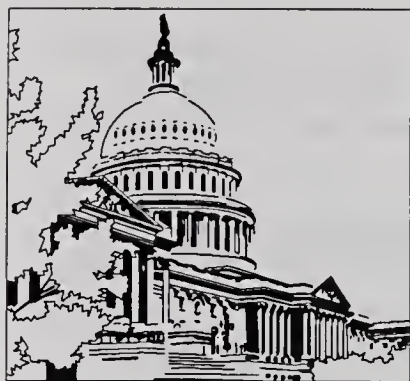
Congressman Stan Parris



Ron Johnson

Administrator to Hold All Employees Meeting

The budget situation remains unresolved. As a result, FNS needs to finalize the furlough strategy in the event it is not resolved by September 30. Because of the uncertainty, FNS will delay the implementation of the furlough as long as possible. On September 25, Betty Jo Nelsen will address Headquarters employees to give the broad picture on how the proposed furlough would work. Regional Administrators will be conducting similar meetings.



ON THE HILL...

by Bob Beard

Hearing on Farmers' Markets

Betty Jo Nelsen was the lead witness on September 18 as the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations and Nutrition held a hearing on the use of Food Stamps at farmers' markets. The hearing focused on the benefits to both low-income clients and farmers that result from getting the low-income population to shop at farmers' markets. Although some administrative problems were noted, most witnesses praised the efforts currently underway in both the WIC program and in the Food Stamp Program. Witnesses included the Agriculture Commissioners from Texas and Massachusetts (where extensive farmers' market programs are underway), a participant from Washington, D.C., Public Voice (a public policy organization), and farmers from Pennsylvania and Texas.

Work Force Diversity Team Makes Recommendations

The Work Force Diversity Task Team was back at Park Office Center again this week, preparing their recommendations for recruitment and hiring, retention of good employees, organizational culture, and fairness in delivery of program benefits. They made a presentation to **Betty Jo Nelsen** on Thursday, and a full report will be made in the next issue of the Friday Letter.

While the Task Team was in this week, an awards banquet was held in their honor. **Administrator Nelsen** presented the Task Team and Technical Advisors with Certificates of Appreciation and a Trophy for all of their hard work and dedication in providing strategies to achieve and effectively manage a diversified FNS work force while providing fair treatment for all employees and program participants.

TASK TEAM MEMBERS:

Melvin Fong, Team Leader, WRO
Sharon Bingham, HQs
Alfred Escoto, SWRO
Pamela Fields, MPRO
Cecilia Fitzgerald, HQs
Arthur Frost, MWRO
Crayton Lankford, SERO
Thomas O'Connell, HQs
Jaime Rivera, MARO
Lynda Silva, NERO
Carol Stansfield, HQs
Juliana Vicario, MARO
Celia Vila, HQs
Maurice Wade, MPRO

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Brenda Bryant, Civil Rights Division
Floyd Wheeler, Personnel Division

Speaking personally...

Once again I want to thank all the FNS employees who opened their hearts and pocketbooks to help those less fortunate than themselves. Your participation in the months of August and September in the Inter-agency Canned Food Drive for the Capital Area Food Bank was most successful.

Our contributions included all sorts of food items as well as cash donations for the drive. With the cash, Jan Howerton of ORO and Jeff Held from my office went on a grocery shopping spree to purchase items most needed by the Food Bank. All of our contributions have gone to the Food Bank now and we understand that the entire drive was a tremendous success.

Again, thank you for your participation and generosity!

NEW PUBS...

Hot off the press is the Summer 1990 issue of the Commodity Foods newsletter. Copies are being sent to regional offices, all school districts, and other appropriate locations.

A little history...in 1987, FNS began a major overhaul of the commodity distribution programs to make them more

responsive to the needs of commodity users. One goal was to improve communication with school food service workers at the district and local level. FNS wanted to tell them what commodities would likely be offered in the coming school year; give them tips on handling and storing foods; offer suggestions for using particular com-

modities; and share ideas among the schools.

Instead of reaching them through memos to the State (the usual route), FNS decided to send a newsletter directly to the school districts who actually order the foods--23,000 copies are printed!

Look for announcements of new publications in this new section!

Employee Profile...

by Craig Forman

Mountain Plains food program specialist **Joe Fisher** is no cookie-cutter bureaucrat. Raised on a remote ranch west of Casper, Wyoming, during World War II, Joe has led an interesting and varied existence ever since. Though he's logged a full decade of service in such serious enterprises as welfare casework, food stamp quality control analysis, and SNP program review, **Joe** is known around the office for his zany humor.

Married to his high school sweetheart at the tender age of 18, **Joe** pursued a degree in history at Drury College in Missouri. Though he was a serious student, his interest in sports carried him beyond the bounds of scholarship. He was one of the founding fathers of the Bob Uecker Fan Club, formed in honor of the third-string catcher for the St. Louis Cardinals. **Joe** wrote several accounts of Uecker's infrequent appearances in Cardinal games that were printed in his college newspaper and then sent to Uecker. The irrepressible Cardinal catcher liked the articles so well he used some of the tidbits in his autobiography Catcher in the Wry.

After graduating from college, **Joe** served a 1-year hitch with the U.S. Navy that included 8 months aboard a small fire-support ship off the coast of Vietnam. Returning stateside, he taught high school English for a year, then put out applications for graduate school and landed a teaching assistantship at the University of Minnesota. During the next 8 years in Minneapolis, **Joe** completed course requirements for his doctorate, but decided to forego an academic career when the college teaching job market hit bottom. He moved back to Missouri, where he worked at a public TV station.

After funds for his position at the TV station ran out, **Joe** went to work as a caseworker for Greene County Depart-

ment of Social Services in 1980. When FNS sought people a few years later to staff a project in Missouri, **Joe** got the nod. When that project ended 18 months later, he came west to Denver and hired on as a hand at the SNP ranch, wrangling school lunch records.

Since then, Mountain Plains staff has been exposed to various examples of **Joe's** aberrant humor. Notable amongst them were **Joe's** compassionate campaign on behalf of Imelda Marcos. He announced a drive to collect high heels, pumps, slippers, sandals, loafers, wedgies, and flats to replace the 3,000-plus pairs of footwear that the former first lady of the Philippines left behind when she was forced to flee the Presidential Palace in Manila.

Fisher's stock in trade, though, are news clippings, harmless bits of information gleaned from newspapers and magazines. An innocently worded story might escape the attention of the ordinary reader, but **Joe** seizes on it as part of his repertoire. "World's Tallest Man Dies in Fall at Home," for example, becomes comic putty in **Joe's** hands, though he carefully avoids trivializing the real content of the news story.

When the serious side of **Joe Fisher** asserts itself, which occurs at least 20 minutes each day, he becomes the amateur scholar still pursuing his love of history. In addition, **Joe** is an avid soccer player and fan. During this summer's World Cup playoffs, **Joe** took annual leave to watch matches on TV with his 11-year old son Matthew.

Ask **Joe** what he enjoys reading these days and he'll tell you selections from humorist S.J. Perelman and scripts from the old "Monty Python" shows. Mention the Python scripts and **Joe** immediately brings forth details of a show in which Adolf Hitler is supposedly living in England. The bumbling Python troupe mistakenly refers

to him as Mr. Hilter, who takes no pains to disguise his universally recognizable face.

Using a diabolical figure like Adolf Hitler in a comedy sketch is an inspiration that easily could have sprung from the fertile imagination of **Joe Fisher**. It may seem bizarre at first, but if more people had seen Hitler as a comic figure rather than taking him seriously, world events might have taken a far better course. Being exposed to **Joe Fisher's** endless comic inspirations, you can't help feel that his vision of the world is far more sane than the one we see reflected in newspaper and TV reports.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the theme is EMPLOYMENT: INVESTING IN AMERICA'S FUTURE.

What better way is there to invest in America's future than through employment? Employment of all people. And ALL includes the most under-utilized group of workers in America--people with disabilities. A recent poll showed that two out of three working-age people with disabilities are not working and that most WANT to work

So employers, take advantage of the opportunity to invest in America's future by hiring qualified people with disabilities.

You will be glad you did!

A message from the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

1000 POINTS OF LIGHT...

National Marrow Donor Program

Each year an estimated 16,000 children and adults are stricken with leukemia, aplastic anemia or other blood-related diseases. For many the only hope for survival is a bone marrow transplant. Nearly 70 percent of those who could benefit from a marrow transplant can not find a compatible match within their own families. These patients need to find unrelated donors - people willing to come to the assistance of others in need. Presently, there is about a one in 20,000 chance of finding an unrelated donor in the general population. Perhaps thousands of lives could be saved if more people added their names to the list of potential donors.

The requirements to be a marrow donor are few. Donors must be between the ages of 18 and 55 and be able to pass a thorough physical examination. Suitability of donors is determined by a simple blood test.

Please consider becoming a marrow donor. Below is a list of the Donor Centers in Washington and each FNS Regional Office city. Chances are there is also a donor center located near each of the Field Offices, too. If you have any questions or want some more detailed information on donating bone marrow, contact **Paul Havey**, NERO, FTS 835-6483 or the National Marrow Donor Program at 1-800-654-1247.

WASHINGTON

American Red Cross Washington Region
2025 E Street
Washington, D.C. 20006
Debbie Caffrey, Judy Decker (202) 728-6663

NERO

American Red Cross Northeast Region
180 Rustcraft Road
Dedham, MA 02026
Deb Katcher-Buckley (617) 461-2075

MARO

New Jersey HLA Registry Foundation
909 Oradell Avenue
Oradell, NJ 07649
Elie Katz, Ph.D. (201) 265-2623

SERO

American Red Cross, Atlanta Region
1925 Monroe Drive N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30324
Niles Reese (404) 881-9800 ext. 890

MPRO

Colorado Marrow Donor Program
7000 E 47th Avenue Drive, Suite 600
Denver, CO 80216
Tony Seele (303) 355-7480

SWRO

The Blood Center at Wadley
9000 Harry Hines Blvd
Dallas, TX 75235
(214) 351-8531

WRO

Irwin Memorial Blood Center
270 Masonic Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94118
Rosie Lamareaux (415) 567-6400 ext. 414

GET THE EDGE

As the competition for advancement in your job gets tougher, you need an edge. By providing you with the opportunity to develop strong communication skills, Toastmasters gives you that edge. Come To One of Our Meetings!

9/25 6th floor, 10/2 4th floor

GET THE TOASTMASTERS EDGE

AROUND THE COUNTRY...



- Since the award of higher caseload levels following the \$3.1 million supplement grant for CSFP, participation for all Midwest States has dropped significantly below the new authorized levels. While all Midwest States are now under caseload, the greatest decrease has been in Michigan. Participation for Michigan's WIC program has declined from the March caseload authorization of 52,463 to a July figure of 47,069. Similarly, Michigan's elderly participation has dropped from the authorized caseload of 33,911 to 31,005 in July. The reason for the decline in participation is not known, as no attempts to control Program participation have been in effect since caseload levels were raised.
- FNS staff attended ceremonies in San Juan, Puerto Rico, commemorating the delivery of the last 500 milk coolers donated by the Puerto Rico milk industry to the Commonwealth's Department of Education.

MWRO Softball Team's "Wet" Season

by Rick Almendarez

The words which best describe MWRO's 1990 softball season are rain and make-up games. During most of the summer you knew it was a game day just because it was raining. However, despite the weather conditions, the team finished the regular season with a record of 9 wins and 2 losses, losing to U.S. Courts in the playoffs and ending what seemed to be a year of destiny. This year the team even had a "uniform" and a new name, the "U.S.D.A. Prime Cuts."

The U.S.D.A. Prime Cuts were comprised of people from FNS and several people from other Chicago-area government agencies and businesses. Along with some of the old timers, the team boasted a few new faces this year. (The team "thanks" those supervisors that considered the fate of the softball team when hiring.) The FNS players from our agency this year included "Quick" Tim English, John "Scoop" Kwit, John "What position am I playing?" Hanna, Kevin "DH" Condon, Joe "Bad Finger" Knaup, Lisa "Which league am I playing in?" Bauer, Don "Wind-Pitch" Koch and Rick "Bad Back" Almendarez.



Tim English



John Kwit

Jan Lilja Visits WRO

Jan Lilja spent a busy 3 days in Los Angeles, CA, August 22-24, with WRO Administrator Sharon Mackay, getting her first look at operating FNS Programs since becoming director of OAE. Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen had planned to make the trip, which included an address to the National Eligibility Worker's Convention, but asked Jan to go in her place when the budget crisis required her to remain at Headquarters.

"The trip was both pleasureable and educational," said Jan. "I especially en-

joyed the opportunity walk through the process a WIC client goes through during a typical WIC visit, from initial contact, through the nutrition education component, to finally picking up the vouchers."

Ms. Lilja and Ms. Mackay also visited the Ninth Street School, a Summer Food Service Program site in downtown Los Angeles that serves children from homeless families, and the Weingart Center, which has an innovative program allowing businesses and the public to purchase meal vouchers redeemable at the center's

dining facility, to give to the homeless instead of cash.

Ms. Lilja and Ms. Mackay, also participated in a round table discussion with local service providers using USDA commodities, and toured a community service center and a large district welfare office where clients are certified for food stamps. Both also met with Los Angeles Field Office staff, and staff of the Bell, California, office for the Regional Office administered Summer Food Service Program, as well as attending part of a group retailer authorization training.

PROGRAM NEWS

Food Stamps

Hill Staffer visits FNS

Lynn Gallagher, a House Agriculture Committee staffer, joined headquarters' Food Stamp supervisors in their monthly meeting earlier this week. **Lynn** is a former caseworker and State public assistance supervisor who has been with the Agriculture Committee since 1981. Her knowledge and experience in the Food Stamp Program made her a welcome participant in our meeting.

In addition to hearing from **Lynn**, **Tim O'Connor** and **Linda Basham** set up an on-line exhibit of the New Mexico EBT system. We were able to use the actual equipment from New Mexico to make test debits and credits. The last item on the agenda was a report from **Abigail Nichols** on a very interesting meeting she chaired with State representatives and Treasury Department officials on the potential use of income tax refunds for offsetting food stamp recipient claims.

Other news...

- New Mexico has informed us that the last of the four major grocery store chains in the area, Albertsons, has signed on with a third party, SunWest Bank, and has agreed to participate in the EBT project. As a result, each of the four major chains has now agreed to participate in the project, with three of those utilizing vendors other than the primary contract, the First National Bank of Albuquerque.

Special Nutrition

- FNS met with Staff from ERS to begin work on developing a WIC food price index. ERS and FNS staff have identified food price information that is available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and now are working on structuring an appropriate food price index for each participant group. The hope is to have an index available for use by the time the President's budget is released.
- HNIS sponsored an exhibit on behalf of USDA at the "Health People 2000" Conference in Washington, D.C., September 6 and 7. The U.S. Public Health Service released "Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives," challenging all sectors of the nation to improve American's health and health care services, and to reduce health risks, at the conference. The cost of health care in the U.S. is reported to be 11.5% of GNP now, with a projected increase to 15% of GNP by 2000. The objectives focus on increased access to health care; a decrease in the disparities between minorities, children, low income people, and other Americans; and an increased span of health life and individual responsibility for health for all Americans.

FROM THE HEALTH UNIT...

Come Walk with the Lunch Bunch!

Everyday at lunchtime walkers are getting together for their daily exercise. Walking is great for the cardiovascular system, blood pressure rate, weight reduction, plus...you have so much more energy! Everyone walks at their own pace, some walk everyday--others 2 or 3 times a week. They meet around noon in the lobby. If you're interested, call Nurse **Perkey** at 756-6000, or stop by the Health Unit, Room 218. Come join in, bring a friend...it feels good!



Wellness Program Saves Employee's Life

Velma Venable participated in the Wellness Program that was held at FNS on Wednesday, September 12. That following Sunday, **Velma** received a call from **Dr. M. Rahnama**, an Occupational Health Doctor, telling her that her blood sugar showed signs of diabetes and she should call her family doctor right away. On Monday morning **Velma** went to the Health Unit and Nurse **Perkey** arranged for **Velma** to see a doctor who specialized in Diabetes. **Velma** will need Diabetic Education as well as medication. This program may have saved **Velma's** life as her blood sugar was dangerously high. It is important to participate in some kind of Wellness Program as many diseases do not give warnings.

Reminders...

Don't forget to come and listen to **Dr. James Burris** who will speak to us about hypertension and cholesterol. This will be on 9/25, at 10:00, in the 4th floor conference room.

Also, don't forget about the Presidential Sports Award Program that was mentioned a few issues ago. Many people are doing it and enjoying the rewards! Call the Health Unit for more info!

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
• Program Analyst	(A)	GM-0345	14	10/01/90	90-50*	OAE
• Home Economist	(A-LCA)	GS-0493	7/9	09/28/90	90-H-109***	HNIS
• Secretary Typing	(A-LCA)	GS-0318	10	09/25-90	90-110	OA
• Personnel Officer	(A)	GS-0201	12	10/09/90	90-113	SERO
• Supvry. Prog. Analyst	(A)	GM-0345	14	10/29/90	90-114	OAE
• Home Economist	(A-LCA)	GS-0493	5/7	10/16/90	90-H-115	HNIS
• Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-0318	5	10/15/90	90-116	SFPD
• Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-0318	3/5	10/15/90	90-117	FDD
• Program Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	9/12	10/15/90	90-118	OAE
• Budget Analyst	(A-LCA)	GS-0560	7	10/15/90	90-119	BUD
• Accountant	(A-LCA)	GS-0510	7	10/15/90	90-120**	ACD
• Systems Account	(A-LCA)	GS-0510	9	10/15/90	90-120A**	ACD

* - Reannouncement - Those who previously applied need not reapply

** - Position will be filled as an Accountant or a Systems Accountant

*** - Extension of closing date

AREA OF CONSIDERATION

- (A) - All Sources
(A-LCA) - All Sources-Local
Commuting Area

OFFICE LOCATION

- SERO - Southeast Region
BUD - Budget Division
HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
FDD - Food Distribution Division
SFPD - Supplemental Food Programs Division
ACD - Accounting Division
OA - Office of the Administrator

Darlene L. Barnes, Editor
David K. Warner, Desktop Designer
Pam Faith, Photography

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update your mailing address or to alter the number of copies you receive, please mail your changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 819, Alexandria, Virginia, 22302, Telephone 756-3286.

Upcoming Events...

SEPTEMBER

- 23-27 United Council on Welfare Fraud Training Conference, San Antonio, TX
25 All Employees Meeting with Betty Jo
28 Vernon Morgan's Last Day

OCTOBER

- 2 10:00 Film: The Milagro Beanfield War
2:00 Film: Stand and Deliver
3 3:30 Dr. Novello (Surgeon General)
4 10:00 & 2:00 Slides Exhibit for Hispanic Heritage Month
15-19 American Dietetics Assoc. Mtg. Denver, CO

(CFC CAMPAIGN BEGINS!)